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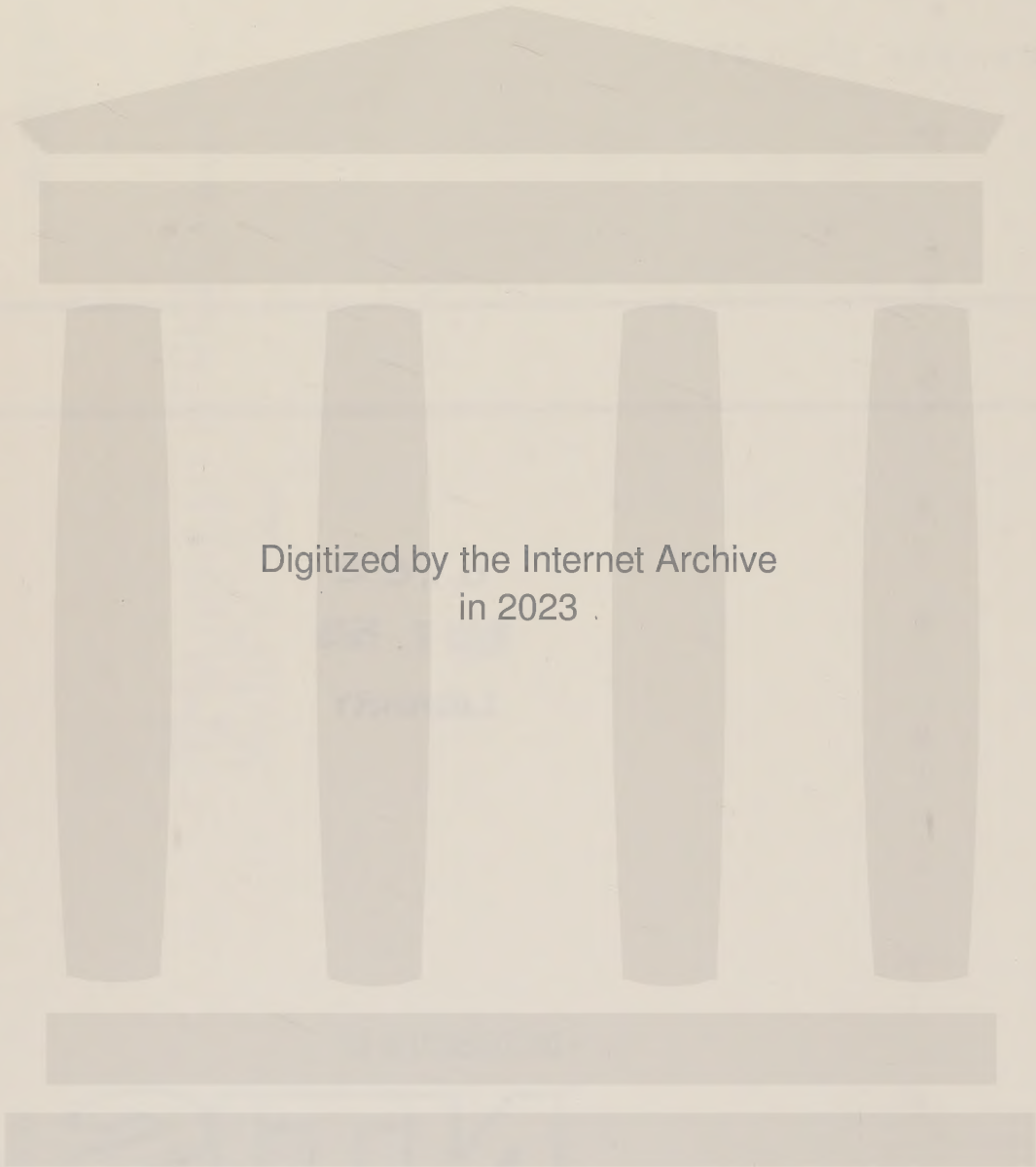

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

(Wen-wu /Cultural Relics/)

Wei Yüan's Thought against Aggression 1

(Li-shih Yen-chiu /Historical Research/)

The Touchstone for True and False Marxism 15

Proletarian Dictatorship Is Our Heirloom 31

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Wei Yüan's Thought against Aggression

by

the Workers Theoretical Group of the Peking Equipment Installation Company, and the Editing and Writing Group of "Manuscripts on Modern History of China"

(Wen-wu /Cultural Relics/, No. 5, May 1975)

Wei Yüan (魏源 1794-1857), alias Mo Shen, was a native of Shaoyang, Hunan. He lived at a time when Chinese society was undergoing radical change, when class and national contradictions were extremely sharp. Prior to the Opium War, the reactionary and decadent Ch'ing Dynasty was already rapidly declining as peasant uprisings broke out one after the other, throwing feudal rule into turmoil. In 1840, the British capitalist aggressors launched the Opium War which blasted open the doors of China with guns. China slid into the misery of becoming a semi-colony, and the industrious and courageous Chinese people were driven into a life of even heavier exploitation and oppression. Faced with such a reality, what should be done? Should people rise and defy the aggressors, uphold the independence of the country and national dignity? Or should they kneel down in capitulation, resort to treason in exchange for glory and bring about the fall of the Chinese nation and its extermination? Such was the issue which was thrown sharply to every class and every group in China, and which urgently demanded an answer.

Chairman Mao points out: "Under the conditions in which classes exist, there are as many doctrines as there are classes. Even the various groups belonging to the same class have their own doctrines." ("On New Democracy")

Steeped in glorious revolutionary traditions, the Chinese people raised high the banner of patriotism and resistance and heroically defied the capitalist invading bandits. "Hear ye the throbbing of thunder as we approach Sanyuanli, countless thousands of people thronging the village at the same time, their sense of justice giving rise to indignation and courage. Uniting together, the villagers beat the invaders soundly." 1/ These militant and passionate verses constituted a vivid description of the Chinese people's revolutionary spirit as they resolutely resisted and opposed capitulation, and boldly kept up the struggle to win victory.

The heroic resistance put up by the Chinese people against the aggressors aggravated the division that had developed within the feudal ruling class. The big aristocrats, big bureaucrats and big landlords constituted "the headquarters of national capitulationism. On the one hand, they are afraid of the destruction the war would be inflicting on their property, while on the other hand they dread the rising of the masses. Their capitulationist tendency is therefore inevitable." (Mao Tse-tung, "The Situation and Tasks of the War of Resistance Against

Japan After the Fall of Shanghai and Taiyüan") Such figures as Min Ning, the Emperor Tao Kuang, Mu-chang-a, the Chief Armaments Minister, Ch'i Shan the Governor of Hopei, and I-li-pu, the Governor of Kiangsu and Chekiang, stood out as the representatives of the capitulationists. At that time, the middle and small landlords were more or less hurt by the British opium smuggling and armed aggression, in the same way that they were often hurt by the land annexations pushed by the big landlords; there was therefore a conflict of interest between them and the foreign aggressors and big landlords. At the critical moment when the country was in danger of being subjugated, although there also existed class contradictions between them and the peasants, they stood for resisting foreign aggression, opposing capitulation, and daring to struggle with the capitulationists. Among their representatives were Kung Tzu-chen, Lin Tse-hsü and Wei Yüan. The two factions within the feudal landlord class -- one wanting to capitulate, the other wanting to resist -- found themselves confronting each other in a bitter debate.

(I)

Should there be resistance or should there be compromise? This was the first controversial issue that came across Wei Yüan and his opponents, the capitulationists.

In order to surrender and commit treason, the capitulationists cooked up the reactionary theory of "appeasing the barbarians." And the first "reason" they gave for their "appeasement" theory was that "all the British wanted was but opening up trade." 2/

Was it really so? Not the least.

Wei Yüan pointed out critically that the British aggressors were actually committing aggression and plunder under the pretext of opening up trade. The Opium War was precisely that kind of predatory war launched under the cover of protecting their China trade. "In between the four seas, there is not a place where their men-of-war have not reached, and wherever there is land and people, they would look askance at them with the design to rob them of their wealth." 3/ They had their tentacles extended in all directions to become the "overlord of the seas," and the chief enemy of the Chinese nation. Wei Yüan saw in them their "unscrupulous profiteering" nature 4/ which made them commit economic aggression with the backing of violence, "accompanying commercial activities with military activities, making trade and armed force complement each other." 5/ Behind the "opening up of trade" were sharp steel swords and devilish guns for ruthless plunder.

Worth noting was Wei Yüan's warning that not only the British capitalist aggressors but the old Tsars were doing this as well. In his "Account of Imperial Expeditions" /Sheng Wu Chi/ he made a systematic study of the history of the old Tsars' plunder of China, pitilessly exposed the design of the old Tsars, and warned that while dealing with the British aggressors coming in from the southeast coast, people must not forget the wolfish ambitions of Tsarist Russian aggressors to invade

China from the northern land mass. Wei Yüan's bosom friend Lin Tse-hsü cried out in an even louder voice to draw people's attention to the fact that "it would be Russia that will eventually become China's disaster!" 6/ Later, when the old Tsars took the opportunity to annex large tracts of Chinese territory during the second Opium War, those vigilant remarks by Wei Yüan and Lin Tse-hsü about the aggressive ambitions of the old Tsars turned out to be brilliant prophecies.

The second "reason" the capitulationists gave for their "appeasement" theory was that the foreign aggressors "possessed strong ships and powerful artillery, a challenge difficult to stand up to." 7/

Wei Yüan dealt the theory of "appeasing the barbarians" a mighty blow. He held that there was nothing frightening in "the strong ships and powerful artillery" of the foreign armada which could have its way on the high seas but once deep inland in the rivers, they would become clumsy. On the contrary, China's "wooden ships" and "fire boats," though unable to cruise the oceans, were very practical for defense against the enemy in river waters. Here Wei Yüan referred to the experiences of the people of Vietnam who "twice routed the barbarians who were left with not one sail to return, and all that was done by luring the enemy deep into the inland rivers." 8/ He argued that so long as they "fought with intelligence and not with brute strength alone" and "made the enemy lose their advantages" while "exploiting their disadvantages," 9/ it was possible to defeat the "strong ships and powerful artillery" of the foreign aggressors. It is worth noting that Wei Yüan saw from the practical experience he gained in waging heroic struggles the reliability of "just people," and he made clear that "a nation rises with the support of its people,"10/ "powerful weapons are not as important as a united people." If this was assured, "the small can overcome the big, the fast the slow." 11/

The third "reason" put forward in support of the "appeasement" theory was "to appease and then control the barbarians with grace and justice." 12/

Here they fell under the feet of Confucius the old sage, as they did their utmost to advocate the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius with the hope that the dead spirit of Confucius and Mencius would rise against the theory of resistance propagated by Wei Yüan. In an "imperial edict," Min Ning, the Emperor Taokuang, uttered such nonsense as "we should give them special treatment, so that we may hope that there will be joy and peace for everyone." 13/ The master called the tune, and the slaves danced to it. I Shan and Ch'i Ying stated that Confucius' "practicing faith and honesty, sincerity and respect toward barbarians" 14/ should become the foreign policy of the Ch'ing Dynasty. I-li-pu advocated that the "teachings of Confucius and Mencius on magnanimity" 15/ should be applied to the foreign aggressors. One of I-li-pu's intimates, Chang Hsi, declared: "Strong ships and powerful artillery represent tyranny and not enlightenment; the practice of the dynasty of heaven is entirely based on the reign of enlightenment," "our dynasty rules with virtue and not with might." 16/ As could be

seen, the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius became in modern times the theoretical basis on which the decadent and declining reactionaries capitulated to foreign aggression. They not only became the doctrines of counter-revolutionary restoration but also the doctrines of foreign worship and treason, a double role at that.

Wei Yüan opposed the capitulationist line of worship for Confucius and treason. He held that the foreign aggressors bullied the weak but yielded to might. "Might inspires fear, and only with that would they respect us and abide by our rules." 17/ "Favors and righteousness" could only wet their aggressive appetite. To halt aggression, the only way would be to "counter armed force with armed force," 18/ to oppose unjust wars with just wars. Such thoughts of Wei Yüan originated mainly from the struggles waged by the people against aggression, inheriting and developing the "eliminate war with war" strategy introduced by the Legalists in history.

(II)

The second issue of controversy between Wei Yüan and the capitulationists was: Should we give attention to studying the strong points of foreign countries, or should we remain blind and deaf to them?

Whether or not attention should be paid to studying the strong points of foreign countries had a great deal to do with whether or not foreign aggression was to be resisted. If the policy was to "appease the barbarians," then it would be natural to oppose "mastering the strong points of the barbarians in order to overpower them." If there was to be resistance, then there would be the need to pay attention to learning the strong points of foreign countries, not to mention the fact that the Western capitalist countries were at that time advanced in science and technology. As Wei Yüan said: "Those that are capable of learning from the barbarians will be able to over-power them; those that are incapable of doing so will be over-powered by them." 19/ It was clear enough that as Wei Yüan saw it, whether or not the strong points of foreign countries should be studied had a very close bearing on whether or not national independence could be safeguarded at that time.

The capitulationists who cooked up and propagated the theory of "appeasement" did all they could to stop the studying of the strong points of foreign countries under a multitude of pretexts. They opposed the equiping of the country with Western warships by denouncing this as "a show of weakness." 20/ They also opposed "learning foreign techniques" to build ships and make equipment by denouncing this as "wasteful." They were against the learning of the West's modern machine building industry by condemning this as "the last thing that should be done in building up the army," "a lewd stunt that would confuse people's minds." 21/ They were against the translating of foreign books and the investigation of conditions in foreign countries, denouncing this as "superfluous." They rejected all that was new, and held on

to remnants of the old, causing the nation to decline further; but once faced with the armed armada of the foreign powers, they were scared out of their wits and fell on their knees.

Wei Yüan persisted in his patriotic stand and severely refuted the various absurdities of the capitulationists. Referring to the nonsense the capitulationists said about Western modern machinery industry as a "lewd stunt" totally useless, he retorted: "For something useful, it may be an uncanny feat, but certainly not a lewd stunt." 22/ So long as it benefited the national welfare and the life of the people, it should not be regarded as an evil. He ridiculed bitterly those stubborn conservatives as a bunch of stale, pedantic and naive "Confucian scholars," a school of short-sighted and ignorant "summer insects" and "frogs in a well." He came up with a whole set of ideas on how the strong points of foreign countries ought to be studied.

In the first place, militarily, he hoped that studies could be conducted on Western warships and firearms as well as methods in raising and training troops. While taking part in the struggle of resistance against the British, Wei Yüan saw with his own eyes the "strong ships and powerful artillary" of the West, which was one of the factors that brought the enemy victory. He therefore proposed to "turn the techniques of foreign countries into the techniques of China," which meant relying mainly on China itself to make its own ships and guns, but at the same time not banning the purchase of ships and guns from foreign countries -- that is, "making and buying" -- to "enrich the nation and strengthen the army." 23/ On matters related to the maintaining and training of troops, Wei Yüan studied the experiences of both China and the West, and proposed that troops should be enlisted on a highly selective basis, trained strictly and maintained rationally, in other words, only when troops were trained regularly in the spirit of fighting courageously and skilfully could their combat efficiency be raised. If there were no soldiers willing to charge fearlessly and die in battle, even if there were strong ships and powerful guns on your side, they would be of no use.

Second, in the economic realm, Wei Yüan stood for studying the modern machine building industry of the Western countries. Originally Wei Yüan was a thinker who "stressed agriculture" without calling for "restricting commerce." 24/ During the Opium War, he saw the rise and prosperity of Britain and France due to capitalist development, and therefore proposed that "agricultural development be slowed down to make way for the urgent development of industry." 25/ He suggested that on the basis of building factories to manufacture steamships and guns, the armaments industry should be turned into civilian industries. This showed that Wei Yüan had already noticed that the development of big industry had wider prospects with civilian production than military production. Wei Yüan also held that apart from government operated military and civilian industries, the private investors should also be encouraged to open up factories. 26/ Such ideas and proposals reflected ideologically the capitalist elements that were already in existence at that time. Wei Yüan's vague hope for the development of a national modern industry in China was a reflection of the demand

of the middle and small landlords who aspired to capitalism and who wanted to become "wealthy citizens with land" 27/ and of merchants who wanted to become "wealthy citizens without land." The debate between Wen Yüan and the capitulationists heralded in an objective sense the polemics between capitalism and feudalism in modern Chinese history.

Wei Yüan also noted the so-called Western democratic political system in the early period. Although he was unaware of what the bourgeois republican system was like at that time, he praised the American Constitution and looked upon Switzerland as "fairyland of the West." 28/ Wei Yüan saw in the so-called democratic political system something more progressive than what the feudal monarchy of China could offer, a reflection of his discontent with the Ch'ing Dynasty. Needless to say, as a member of the landlord class, it was impossible for Wei Yüan to see through the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and perceive its hypocritical and reactionary class essence.

That Wei Yüan advocated "learning from the strong points of the barbarians" 29/ disclosed that he recognized at that time that the capitalist system of the West was superior to the feudal system of China, that the West had its merits while China had its flaws and weaknesses, and that there was a need for China to learn from the West. But he also stressed that the ultimate aim of these studies was "not to have to rely on foreign barbarians," 30/ and that only when this was realized could "learning from the barbarians" be regarded as a real success. Although Wei Yüan advocated learning from the West, nowhere was there a sense of national inferiority; on the contrary, he carried with him a strong sense of national dignity and a firm feeling of self-confidence. He held that "there was an abundance of wisdom in China," 31/ that China was not backward in the past when it made many early scientific inventions and discoveries, for example, the calendar system whose calculations were extremely accurate and the time-markings on clocks which were as good as those made in the West. As to the compass and the dipper (壺滴), both were first invented in China and later brought to various countries in the West. He affirmed that so long as there was "the determined effort to persist to the very end until the last breath," 32/ China would certainly become a rich and powerful nation, "a nation culturally advanced and modern, abounding in wisdom, a people of the East, but resembling the people of the West," 33/ in other words, as wealthy and powerful and prosperous as any nation in the West. Such sense of national pride and progressiveness on the part of Wei Yüan was at that time as rare as it was precious.

(III)

The third issue of controversy Wei Yüan found himself locked in debate with the capitulationists was: To "rely on just people" 34/ or to "suppress the people and please the foreigners"? 35/

Chairman Mao points out: "The deepest and thickest source of the great war effort lies among the masses." ("On Protracted War") In order to resist foreign aggression, the masses should be mobilized and

relied upon. If you want to resist but depart from the masses of the people, you will find it difficult to move even one inch. If you view the masses of the people with enmity and suppress their struggle of resistance, the result will be compromise or capitulation. Therefore, the approach taken toward the struggle against aggression waged by the masses of the people became the touchstone for patriotism and treason.

The capitulationists with Min Ning, Emperor Taokuang, as commander-in-chief, persisted in carrying out the Confucianist line as they clung to the teachings of the ancestors that "the trouble lies not without but within" and "guard against the people with greater care than against bandits." 36/ Based on the class nature of the big landlords, they were extremely resentful of the masses of the people, and feared the latter's struggle against aggression. They viewed the struggle against aggression by the masses of the people as "the infected wound inside the belly," 37/ and clamored "before repelling the enemy without we must first of all pacify the people within." 38/ In fact, their talk about "repelling the enemy without" was a hoax, for the real thing they were after was to slaughter the people and commit treason in exchange for personal glory. In order to push such a reactionary line of harming the people to curry favors with foreign invaders, they went so far as to spread a lot of lies and rumors to vilify the people. For example, they charged that the people of Fukien and Kwangtung were "mostly agents of the foreigners," 39/ and the people of Kiangsu and Chekiang were "mostly weak in body and soul." 40/ Etc., etc.

Wei Yüan angrily refuted those absurdities of the capitulationists. Did they not say "the trouble lies not without but within"? To Wei Yüan, however, the principal enemies during the period of the Opium War were not the people but the foreign aggressors. In his "Sheng Wu Chi," he recalled that it was because "he lived at Chianghuai in his late years and saw that whenever warnings against foreign raiders were issued, the military did little to help, that he deeply felt the severity of the problems at large." 41/ He wrote his "Outline of Seafaring Countries" for the purpose of "using barbarians against barbarians," "using barbarians to entertain barbarians" and "restraining barbarians by mastering the techniques of barbarians." It was all the more obvious that he placed "restraining of barbarians" before "restraining of the people."

Did not the capitulationists vilify the people in coastal regions as "agents of foreigners" and "weak both in body and soul"? To these, Wei Yüan countered with facts as he said: If it were really so, then why were those who killed the enemy captain in Kwangtung and damaged the warships referred to as "just people"? Was it not these "just people" who twice captured enemy ships off Taiwan and attacked the British ships at Nan-ao? So the correct conclusion should be: "the people living along the coast have a strong will," 42/ they were "just people" sharing the same feeling of indignation and enmity toward the aggressors. Wei Yüan pointed out: Those who branded the people as

traitors were traitors themselves. In his poem about the struggle waged by the people of Sanyuanli, he wrote: "In fighting the common enemy, the people are united in heart and soul. At one call an army of a hundred thousand strong can be gathered. The enemy commander was nearly captured. Who opened the gates and let in a flood of misfortune? Previously it was said that the people acted as agents for the enemy; but now it can be seen that officials have been giving the enemy every convenience. If we had acted earlier and built up our strength according to the Legalist doctrine of Ch'in, these foreign whales of the seas would be crying helplessly." 43/ As we look at this historical scroll, we see that, on the one hand, the P'ingying corps rattling swords and spears expelled the British invaders courageously and nearly captured the British commander of the invading force. On the other hand, General I Shan in charge of pacification and other capitulationists allowed the enemies to escape so they could return later. The poet drew a sharp contrast between the different attitudes the people and the big officials of the Ch'ing Dynasty held toward the aggressors, condemning the capitulationists while praising the struggles waged by the masses. And he reasoned that if "the Ch'in style" of building the army along Legalist lines were "adopted earlier," there would have been no problem in overpowering the "overlord of the seas."

"Countless war banners flutter over the castle walls, but a pact of disgrace is signed at the castle gates, the tide of wrath ebbing with the dying voices." 44/ The Confucian capitulationist line followed by the rulers of the Ch'ing Dynasty constituted the major cause that led to China's defeat in its war against aggression. Wei Yüan pointed out sharply: The "Son of Heaven" cared only for "his own personal power and interest," 45/ and gave no thought to state affairs; officials, civil and military, opened the doors and bowed with hands folded; the eight banners and the green battalions reputed to be "the crack regiments" collapsed at the first encounter. How could victory be won with such corrupt politics? How could they avoid being humiliated by the enemies?

Wei Yüan held that in face of the powerful enemy, there should be a change in the order of things, and the "Son of Heaven" should "work for the good of the nation" 46/ and make use of the might of the people to counter foreign aggression, so that the country would be able to advance on the road of independence, wealth and power. He was for the idea of "training local militia instead of employing outside troops, and training local sailors in place of using the navy." 47/ The "militia" and "local sailors" could be selected from the "just people" and "outlaws" as well. He said: "Who says that only just people can be relied upon? The 'outlaws' can also be organized." 48/ As he saw it, the leaders of the "unruly masses" so viewed by the "magistrates" whose souls were enslaved by the holy doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, were "capable and talented," belonging to the side of those having good faith, justice and high aspirations, and their men were all "crack troops" capable of long marches and tough battles. 49/ The peasants, handicraftsmen and fishermen living along the coast of Kwangtung were highly

skilled in their trades and full of courage, something that the West would find impossible to match, and if these people were selected to join the military establishment, they could undoubtedly be "regarded as soldiers of the highest caliber." He called for the arming of those "just people" as well as the "outlaws," "providing them with the best training and enforcing strict discipline," so that "not only the nation would have countless more crack troops at its disposal, but countless armed clashes along the coast could be eliminated and countless 'bandits' in the central plains overpowered." Wei Yüan termed this as "countering poison with poison," 50/ a line of thought that clearly carried with it the stamp of the landlord class. But he understood that in order to resist the foreign aggressors, it would be necessary to make use of the strength of the masses of people. The people supported Wei Yüan in his view on "restraining the barbarians," and he looked to the strength of the people to realize his objective of "restraining the barbarians." But Wei Yüan's "restraining the barbarians" was intended for the maintenance of the rule of the Ch'ing Dynasty, in other words, his wanting to use the people to "restrain the barbarians" was for no other purpose than that of meeting the need to consolidate the feudal rule of the Ch'ing Dynasty. It was therefore not at all surprising that he advocated with equal effort strict "control" over the masses of the people, in the sense that they were only allowed to resist foreign aggression but were not allowed to rebel. He even went so far as to attempt to extinguish the fire of the peasant revolution against feudalism under the pretext of resisting foreign aggression, and this was the essence of his "countering poison with poison" strategy. Nevertheless, his proposals for "employing just people" at a time when national contradictions had become major contradictions and opposition to capitalist aggression the pressing task of the Chinese people, were still largely noted for their progressive character.

(IV)

The fourth issue of controversy between Wen Yüan and the capitulationists was on instituting reforms or keeping things as they were.

Foreign policy is the continuation of domestic policy, and if the domestic policy was to keep things as they were, foreign policy would mean compromise and concession. If domestic policy were not revised, there would be no end to external misfortunes. In order to resist foreign aggression, it was necessary to institute internal reforms, do away with all the ills and introduce "rule of law." The instituting of reforms was an important link in winning the war against aggression. Therefore, the struggle between reform and conservatism was essentially a struggle between resistance and capitulation, patriotism and treason.

The capitulationists, with Min Ning as their chieftain, raised the sinister banner of Confucius and Mencius in "learning from the ancient kings," keeping faith in the "sacred instructions" of their ancestors, and calling for "belief in only the existing order." 51/

"All things have been done while paying respect to Heaven and following in the footsteps of our ancestors, and what reason have we to change all the rules all of a sudden now?" 52/ They held the dogma -- "learning from the ancestors" and "believing in the existing order" -- as advocated by the Confucians as a shield with which to obstruct reform and progress and to maintain the decadent feudal system and the vested interests of the big landlord class. They chose to capitulate and resort to treason rather than change "the laws of their ancestors," the slightest tampering of which was absolutely forbidden. The combination of preserving the ancient and keeping to the old with the worship of anything foreign and treason made up the new features of the feudal rulers as they entered the era in which China became a semi-colony. The roots of such thinking as preserving the ancient and keeping to the old, and the worship of anything foreign and treason were to be found in the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. Just as Lu Hsün had revealed in his time, "our ancient and sacred ancestors of virtue not only left us mottos calling on us to preserve the ancient and keep to the old, but also arranged at the same time for the grand feast on which we are to offer tribute in the form of jade and silk and even our children to our conquerors." ("The Grave: Rambling Talk Under the Lamp")

Opposed to the capitulationist principle of preserving the ancient and keeping to the old, Wei Yüan proposed the principle of "making internal rule serve the needs of foreign policy." 53/ He loudly agitated for changing the existing laws to make way for reform, so that the dying nation hoping to survive could be saved. He pointed to the fact that "there are under Heaven no laws which after hundreds of years would have no defects, no laws that have never been revised before, no laws that have become practical without having their defects sorted out and discarded, and no laws that have become flexible without being made less complicated." 54/ He asserted: "A small change will bring about minor reform and a big change major reform. Minor reform would mean limited efficiency in building a new order, whereas major reform would mean establishing a new order on a grand scale." 55/ These short statements completely shattered the fallacy of the capitulationists that "the laws of the ancestors must not be changed." Propounding the relationship between "change," "reform" and "order," he pointed out that "change" constituted the basis for "reform" and "order," and that only by changing or revising those laws that had become harmful and faulty could the Ch'ing Dynasty overcome its plight and become once again a rich and powerful nation with "great order" instituted.

Such thoughts of Wei Yüan on changing the laws and introducing reforms had their roots in history. He worshipped the Legalist school and loved to study the works of Shang Yang, Han Fei, Chia I and Ch'ao Ts'o. He held Kuan Chung and Shang Yang in high esteem, as he remarked, "The making of a wealthy and powerful nation should be accredited to Kuan and Shang." 56/ He praised Shen Pu-hai and Han Fei and called for learning their good qualities while avoiding their faults. He praised Ch'in Shih Huang for abolishing vassalage and establishing the prefectural system, for abolishing the Chingt'ien land

division system and hereditary official appointments, and for making a wide selection of capable and talented people from all over the country to serve the government. 57/ He admired the determination of Emperor Wu of Han who possessed a daring spirit to enforce reforms in a sweeping manner. He inherited and developed the theories of the early Legalists who advocated the progressive historical viewpoint of social transformation, using it as an ideological weapon with which to promote the change of law and the institution of reform in his struggle against the conservativism of the capitulationists. Wei Yüan believed that society was progressing, history was developing, and there was nothing in this world that was not in a state of constant change. Social history would become more and more civilized, and every generation would grow to become better than the last. The systems of Ch'in and Han were on the whole better than those of the Three Dynasties; the prefectural system was in general better than vassalage; the unified taxation system of the Ming Dynasty was more effective than the double taxation system of the T'ang Dynasty; the civil service examination system of the T'ang Dynasty was more advanced than the selective system of the Han Dynasty. Therefore he asserted: "The greater the changes are made in ancient laws, the more the people would benefit from them." To benefit the masses, we should not go against the development of matter and restore the old order. 58/ He laid his emphasis on the reality in which he lived and on changing the remnants of the ancient past in order to suit the needs of the ever developing reality and oppose conservatism of the most stubborn type. He held: "Adminstering the present with rules of the past is to ignore the present reality," and "ignoring the present reality will not make a nation orderly." 59/ These thoughts of Wei Yüan included elements of the theory of evolution and had the active progressive spirit of advancing unservingly against regression.

What also should be noted in relation to Wei Yüan's reform call is the fact that he maintained relatively wide contacts with society while being aware to a certain extent of the living conditions of the people. He held that "if you want to discharge heavy national responsibilities, you must start by making personal visits." At that time there was a serious social crisis: peasants were driven into bankruptcy, and there was famine everywhere. The hungry could not wait till buckwheat grew into maturity but ate it just after its bloom, resulting in deaths of poisoning. Wei Yüan saw all this and sighed in his "Eight Pieces of Miscellany on the Road": "In the wild meadows the buckwheat grows, as the spring winds lash them anew. The flowers bloom in February, and shine like silver in March. But who can wait for autumn, when people can stand hunger no longer. The poisoning flowers are taken as grain, but what else could they do? By quenching their thirst with poison wine, people die, their bodies lying about like hemp thrown in all directions. Woe to these people who had hoped to live a little bit longer but were rewarded with a hundred years' grief." 60/

Under the motivation of a strong desire for instituting reform, Wei Yüan exposed the corrupt and declining Ch'ing court with his sharp pen. He described the Ch'ing court as something resembling a "shabby

cottage," "a cottage that leaks and is full of worms." 61/ Externally the rain leaked, and internally worms made their way into the beams, pushing the whole structure onto the verge of collapse. He severely denounced the handful of worms that hid themselves in the "shabby cottage." He charged: Military commanders defending the frontiers talked "magnanimity and forebearance" with foreign jackals, with greater disasters certain to come; key ministers who took part in the decision-making process talked a mouthful about "keeping to the middle course, inclining to neither side and making no changes"; Confucian scholars, trying to climb upward, talked like parrots lauding the doctrines of the "ancient sages"; ministers of the treasury who wielded economic power were nothing but embezzlers. Here, Wei Yüan directed his criticism at those in power in the Ch'ing court and the Confucianist line they pursued. He contended that "if the court ceased to be corrupt, opium smoking would disappear overnight." 62/ Only by ridding the government of its harmful practices could opium be prohibited and foreign aggression frustrated.

"Measure the actual effect of the reform in the light of reality, and measure the extent of the change in reality from the actual effect." 63/ This was the principle of reform as proposed by Wei Yüan. He held that reforms had to be introduced on the basis of reality so that practical effects could be assured, and nowhere should there be empty talk and impractical planning. Taking into account the rotten nature of the Ch'ing court, he proposed the "discarding of two diseases," which he termed "ignorance of the people" and the "waste of human talent." 64/ He referred to the deception, cowardice, conspiracy and manipulation of power within the ruling class, and to the bureaucratic practices of officials who were unrealistic and hypocritical. He actively advocated the idea of educating the people and cultivating talents. Wei Yüan wrote with confidence: "By training and using capable and talented people, the military and political establishments of the nation will be greatly improved. As the hearts of the people are united, the prestige of the nation will be greatly enhanced. One cry of laughter would bring spring to the four seas, whereas one of anger would change it to autumn." 65/

Nevertheless, Wei Yüan was after all a member of the rapidly declining landlord class. He made every effort to propagate the idea that while the "situation" might change, "Tao" would not. 66/ By "situation" he was referring to the methods of rule, whereas by "Tao" he was referring to the feudal order. As he saw it, changes could only be made in the external features of feudal rule while the primary base of such rule must not be touched. All kinds of reforms, however small, had to be realized through the "benevolence and diligence" of the emperor. This decided that his ideals of realizing an independent, wealthy and powerful nation by means of reform could only vanish like bubbles. What is more, when the T'aip'ing rebellion broke out with the force of a thunderstorm against feudalism and foreign aggression, by instinct he went over to the opposite side of the peasant revolution.

History is the textbook of class struggle. The history of the struggle between Wei Yüan and the capitulationists tells us: In modern Chinese history, the struggle between reform and conservatism, between progress and regression has always been waged around the primary contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation. Should one capitulate to imperialism and become a junior emperor or put up a resolute struggle against imperialist aggression to safeguard national independence? This was an important aspect of the Confucian-Legalist struggle in modern times. Those traitors, from Ch'i Shan and Tseng Kuo-fan to Li Hung-chang and Yüan Shih-k'ai, all sang the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius while they made every effort to sell out the country for personal glory. The doctrines of Confucius and Mencius are doctrines of treason. The renegade and traitor Lin Piao inherited the mantle of all the traitors in modern history and, peddling the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, asked for the "nuclear umbrella" of the Soviet revisionists in an attempt to turn China into a colony of Soviet revisionist social-imperialism. Today, at a time when we are criticizing the reactionary doctrines of Confucius and Mencius in depth, to make a serious study of the Confucian-Legalist struggle as well as the entire history of class struggle, and to expose the capitulationists in modern China, is of significance to settling scores with Lin Piao's crimes of treason once and for all and to conducting education on patriotism.

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Footnotes

1/ Chang Wei-ping, "Sanyuanli." See "Selections of Modern Poetry," Vol. 1.

2/ and 15/ "I-li-pu's Note to Pottinger." See Book Series on Chinese Modern History, "The Opium War," Vol. 5. (Hereafter "Opium War")

3/ Wei Yüan, "Outline of Seafaring Countries," Vol. 52.

4/, 17/, 21/, 26/, 30/ and 33/ Ibid., Vol. 2.

5/ and 19/ Ibid., Vol. 24.

6/ Li Yuan-tu, "Biography of Lin Tse-hsü and Others."

7/ Huang En-t'ung, "Appeasement of Barbarians Theory." See "Opium War," Vol. 5.

8/, 9/, 10/, 11/, 20/, 22/, 29/, 31/, 32/, 39/, 40/, 42/, 47/, 49/ and 50/ Wei Yüan, "Outline of Seafaring Countries," Vol. 1.

12/ and 13/ "An Account of Preparations for Dealing with Barbarians" ("Taokuang Era), Vol. 20.

14/ Chang Hsi, "Diary on Appeasing Barbarians." See "Opium War," Vol. 5.

16/ Chang Hsi, "Visiting the Barbarians." See "Opium War," Vol. 5.

18/, 27/, 57/ and 66/ Wei Yüan, "Ku-wei-t'ang Inner Collections," Vol. 3.

23/, 34/, 48/ and 53/ Wei Yüan, "Beating a Foreign Warship in the Taokuang Years."

24/ See also Wei Yüan, "Ku-wei-t'ang Inner Collections," Vol. 2; "Ku-weit'ang Outer Collections," Vol. 7.

25/ Wei Yüan, "Sheng Wu Chi," Vol. 14.

28/ Wei Yüan, "Outline of Seafaring Countries," Vol. 47.

35/ "Selected Biographies in Ch'ing History: Biography of Ch'i Ying." See "Opium War," Vol. 6.

36/, 37/ and 38/ "An Account of Preparations for Dealing with Barbarians," Vols. 27, 56 and 47.

41/, 56/ and 65/ Wei Yüan, Introduction to "Shang Wu Chi"

43/ Wei Yüan, "Ten Chapters on the Sea." See Lin Ch'ang-i, "Verses of Sheyinqlou."

44/ and 61/ "Ku-wei-t'ang Poetry Collections," Vol. 9.

45/, 46/ and 58/ Wei Yüan, "Ku-wei-t'ang Inner Collections," Vol. 2.

51/ "Edicts of Ch'ing Jen Tsung," Vol. 67.

52/ "Niu Chien's Note to Pottinger." See "Opium War," Vol. 5.

54/ Wei Yüan, "Ku-wei-t'ang Outer Collections," Vol. 7.

55/ Wei Yüan, "Sheng Wu Chi," Vol. 17.

60/ Wei Yüan, "Manuscript of Poems at Ch'ingyehchai."

62/ Wei Yüan, "Ku-wei-t'ang Poetry Collections," Vol. 4.

63/ and 64/ Wei Yüan, Introduction to "Outline of Seafaring Countries."

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The Touchstone for True and False Marxism

-- The Struggle Surrounding the Question of Proletarian Dictatorship in the History of the International Communist Movement (1)

by

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Tientsin Municipal Committee

(Li-shih Yen-chiu /Historical Research/, No. 3, June 20, 1975)

Chairman Mao recently pointed out: "Why did Lenin speak of exercising dictatorship over the bourgeoisie? This question must be thoroughly understood. Lack of clarity on this question will lead to revisionism. This should be made known to the whole nation." This instruction of Chairman Mao's points out the extreme importance of studying the theory of proletarian dictatorship, has very important actual significance and is of deep and far-reaching historical significance.

The theory of proletarian dictatorship is the quintessence of Marxism. It has taken shape and developed in the practice of revolutionary movements of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and in struggle against many varieties of opportunism. Consequently, in order to understand the question of proletarian dictatorship, we must seriously study the historical course of the formation and development of this theory.

Regarding the question of proletarian dictatorship, Marx had made a most incisive summation in a letter to Weydemeyer in 1852. He pointed out: "No credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society, nor yet the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: 1) That the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production; 2) that the struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society."* With this elaboration, Marx comprehensively expressed the whole course of emergence, development and withering away of proletarian dictatorship, summed up all the tasks and actual content of proletarian dictatorship, and provided us with a clear clue for understanding the theory of proletarian dictatorship.

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* "Marx to J. Weydemeyer" (March 5, 1852), "Selected Works of Marx and Engels," Vol. IV, pp. 332-333.

(I)

The Marxist doctrine with respect to class struggle is the foundation of the theory of proletarian dictatorship. Although certain bourgeois thinkers had made some elaborations on the question of classes and class struggle before the birth of Marxism, the elaborations of these bourgeois scholars and the Marxist doctrines of class struggle were, in essence, two wholly different theoretical systems.

After the 16th century, the bourgeoisie established a bourgeois dictatorship so as to destroy feudal production relations and the political rule of the landlord class; after carrying out protracted and acute struggle, they developed capitalist production relations. In order to prove both the inevitability and rationality for the displacement of feudalism by capitalism and of the supersession of feudal rule by bourgeois rule, at a time still before the emergence of Marxism, Thiers, Guizot, Mignet and other historians of the French Restoration Period had pointed out during their study of bourgeois revolutions in 17th-century England and 18th-century France, that "class relations" "ought to be the question of primary concern" to historians. They held that the reason why the above-mentioned revolutions had occurred was because, following the development of history in feudal society, "a great change had taken place in the relative strength of the various classes" but no "corresponding change had occurred in the political system"; the causes of these revolutions lay in the different material interests among various classes in society. At the same time, a group of bourgeois economists represented by Adam Smith and David Ricardo had also carried out economic analyses of class differentiation in capitalist society. They claimed that workers, capitalists and landlords were the three major and fundamental classes that made up a "civilized society" and that wages, profits and land rents were the three kinds of basic income which corresponded to these three classes; moreover, when they analyzed the mutual relations among these incomes, they revealed to a certain extent the antagonism in economic interest between the workers and the other two classes. However, the bourgeois doctrine of class struggle was one built on the foundation of historical idealism. They were only able to perceive certain superficial phenomena of classes and class struggle but were unable to understand the objective laws for the development of class struggle; they came to regard classes as a natural and eternal category but did not know them to be only one kind of historical phenomena related to a definite historical stage in the development of production. Beyond this, their class stand also determined that they would inevitably view exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie as a rational matter and hold that the capitalist system ought to endure forever. They acknowledged the rationale of the bourgeois class struggle against the feudal system, but when the daily developing struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie threatened bourgeois rule, they frantically denied the necessity of class struggle. It was precisely because of this that, after the June uprising of Parisian workers in 1848, Guizot clamored loudly for "social peace," and did his utmost to prove that all the classes in France were "natural and deep-rooted

components of French society"; Thiers slandered the struggle of the French proletariat against the bourgeoisie as having "undermined the security of society"; and Mignet attacked the struggle of the workers against the bourgeoisie at the time of the Paris Commune as a "reckless move." All of this fully bared their reactionary stand, besides proving that in essence their doctrines on class struggle were devised to defend the capitalist system.

On the other hand, Marx's doctrine of class struggle was the theoretical expression of the liberation movement of the proletariat. With the development of capitalism, the exploitation suffered by the proletariat grew heavier and heavier. This inevitably propelled the proletariat to rise up and wage struggle against capitalist oppression. In time, this struggle grew ever larger in scale and by the 1830's and 1840's the spontaneous struggles of the workers had developed into an organized workers' movement. Two uprisings by French workers at Lyon in 1831 and 1834, the Chartist Movement in England after 1836 and the 1844 uprising of the Silesian staff and workers in Germany, served notice that the working class had already mounted the stage as an independent political force. However, because the workers at that time had not clearly perceived the correct road for the emancipation of the proletariat, these struggles all ultimately failed. The theoretical guidance urgently needed for the developing revolutionary situation corresponded precisely with the needs of the proletarian revolutionary movement; Marx and Engels personally took part in revolutionary practice at that time, summed up the experience of the workers' movement, critically inherited the outstanding cultural achievements of mankind and gave birth to the doctrine of Marxism.

Marx and Engels applied the principles of dialectical materialism and historical materialism, penetratingly researched the whole of the historical development of human society, scientifically proved that classes were only a historical category, and that "the existence of classes was merely interrelated with the development of production during a definite historical stage." In the early stages of human history there was a primitive communist society without classes and class antagonism. Only in the last years of this historical stage, following the development of social production forces and the appearance of surplus products and private ownership, did human society begin to split up into mutually antagonistic classes. From this time on, "the history of all human society has been a history of class struggle," class struggle being the motive force in the development of class society and the determining force in bringing about a change from one form of society to another. Capitalist society is the last form of society in human history based on class antagonism. Like slave and feudal societies, it is but one stage in historical development and is by no means meant to endure forever. In capitalist society, the ever sharpening contradiction between the private ownership of the means of production and the social character of production is more and more seriously obstructing the development of productive forces and the progress of social history; at the same time the development of big industry and ruthless exploitation by capitalism has given rise to the proletariat, the greatest of

revolutionary forces, causing it to become the grave-digger for capitalism. The development of class struggle in capitalist society necessarily prompts the proletariat to rise up and use violence to overthrow bourgeois rule and realize proletarian dictatorship. And the proletariat, as determined by its class stand, undertake the great historical mission of doing away with all classes and establishing a communist society where there is no exploitation of man by man. Class differentiation, following the development of mankind's forms of material production, is necessarily and ultimately slated for extinction. This is an objective law of social development. Thus, Marx and Engels, on the basis of class struggle by the working class, founded a basically different doctrine of class struggle from that of bourgeois scholars and laid the ideological foundation for the theory of proletarian dictatorship.

(II)

Lenin pointed out that every step forward in the life cycle of Marxism has been one of struggle. The scientific assertion by Marx and Engels that "class struggle necessarily leads to proletarian dictatorship" has, from the very beginning, met with reckless opposition from bourgeois and petty-bourgeois socialist sectarians in the workers' movement.

Before the emergence of Marxism, Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen, the three major thinkers of utopian socialism, had exerted a very decided influence on the workers' movement. In the early years of the 19th century, the utopian socialists played a definitely progressive role in history. They sharply inveighed against the capitalist system, were sympathetic to what the proletariat had suffered and made a few talented predictions about the society of the future. However, they did not understand the law governing the emergence, development and extinction of capitalism,the great historical role of the proletariat, nor the significance of proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship. Taking the idealist view of history as a point of departure, they held that by merely relying on methods of peaceful propaganda and typical demonstration they would be able to persuade the rich to accept their proposals for transforming society, give up their exploitation and convey the socialist gospel to the poor. Right down to the time that Marxism began to take shape in the 1840's, many socialist sectarians in the workers' movement were still carrying forward and making use of the above-mentioned weaknesses of the utopian socialists. They all did their utmost to deny the scientific conclusion -- "class struggle necessarily leads to proletarian dictatorship" -- as set forth by Marx and Engels; they opposed proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship and advocated taking a reformist road on the existing basis of the capitalist system. For example, the "true socialism" of the German petty-bourgeoisie agitated for a supra-class love in place of class struggle, and advocated carving out a large tract of land for distribution to the poor so that they might found "a village full of heavenly love" on this land. French opportunist Louis Blanc called for labor-capital cooperation, advocated using persuasion as well as loans from bourgeois states to establish producer associations and

social factories so as to gradually oust private capitalist enterprises and thus make the transition to socialism. Proudhon, another French opportunist, advocated workers' credit unions or "people's banks" through which they could subsequently distribute interest-free loans to help the workers develop producer cooperatives and organize the producers to carry out direct and equitable exchange of products so that workers might avoid capitalist exploitation. Emphatically negating class struggle and proletarian revolution, Proudhon claimed nonsensically that there was "no need to promote revolutionary action as a means of reforming society, because this momentarily sensational means appeals to nothing but force and violence." This flood of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois socialist ideas seriously obstructed the development of the workers' movement.

In order to conform to the needs of the revolution, Marx and Engels on the one hand took an active part in the workers' movement and on the other wrote a series of brilliant works which thoroughly criticized the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois socialist trends of thought as well as explaining the theory of proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship. Early in 1845, Marx and Engels in the work "The German Ideology" had already profoundly expounded the idea of inevitability of proletarian revolution, pointing out that in order to eliminate capitalism the proletariat should first of all seize political power. In 1846, Engels, at a meeting called by the Parisian workers, sharply criticized Proudhonism and the reformist ideas of the true socialists and categorically pointed out that what communists advocated was this: "(1) Safeguarding the interests of the proletarians as opposed to those of the property holders; (2) doing this through the abolition of private property and its replacement by public property; (3) recognizing no other means of carrying out these objectives than violent democratic revolution."* Again, in 1847 in his work "Poverty of Philosophy," in light of Proudhon's fallacy opposing violent revolution, Marx stressed: "On the eve of each overall transformation of society, the conclusion of social science is invariably that 'either fight or die; either bloody struggle or destruction. Such is the way the question has to be raised.'"** Early in 1848, Marx and Engels issued the first programmatic document in the history of the international communist movement -- "The Communist Manifesto" -- which fully expounded the doctrine of scientific communism and still more profoundly criticized the various counterfeit theories of socialism. After comprehensively probing the historical development of class struggle, the "Manifesto" pointed out that the objective outcome of the development of class struggle in capitalist society is of necessity that "the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat lays the

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* "Letter from Engels to the Brussels Communist Correspondence Committee," "Selected Works of Marx and Engels," Vol. IV, p. 319.

** "Poverty of Philosophy," "Complete Works of Marx and Engels," Vol. IV, p. 198.

foundation for the latter's domination"; "the first step of the workers' revolution is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy." "Manifesto" further pointed out that the basic task of proletarian dictatorship was that "the proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total volume of productive forces as rapidly as possible." The proletarian revolution must "make the most radical rupture with traditional property relations," and the "most radical rupture with traditional ideas"; while destroying the old relations of production, the proletariat must gradually "eliminate the conditions for the existence of class antagonism and classes"* and effect the transition to communism. Here Marx and Engels had already propounded in a more comprehensive way the basic thought of proletarian dictatorship.

The theory of proletarian dictatorship formulated by Marx and Engels in the course of their struggle against manifold bourgeois and petty-bourgeois socialist sectarians was the "essence" and "quintessence" of Marxist doctrine, providing a powerful ideological weapon for the proletarian emancipation movement.

(III)

In February 1848, not long after "Communist Manifesto" was published, a revolution broke out in France which, taking the workers as the main force, overthrew the July Monarchy and established the Second French Republic. Under the immediate inspiration of the French Revolution, revolutionary movements broke out one after another in nearly all the countries of Europe. However, the proletariat was still politically immature at that time and owing to the ideological influence of men like Louis Blanc, they still lacked understanding as to the class nature of the state and the importance of seizing political power. After the February revolution in France, a great many workers mistakenly sought their own emancipation by way of the bourgeois republic. As a result, after the victory of the February revolution, the old state machine remained almost intact and, making use of the workers' illusion toward the Republic, the bourgeoisie on the one hand hypocritically promised to satisfy the "social demands" of the workers (like setting up certain state factories, establishing a commission chaired by Louis Blanc to make a special study of workers' problems and so forth); on the other hand, they ceaselessly strengthened the bourgeois state machine held in their hands, disarmed the workers and gradually snatched away the fruits won by the workers in revolution. The counter-revolutionary measures of the bourgeoisie aroused strong

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* "Communist Manifesto," "Selected Works of Marx and Engels," Vol. I, pp. 263, 272, 271-272, 273.

discontent among the workers. In June 1848, more than 40,000 unarmed Parisian workers staged an uprising and inspired by slogans calling for the establishment of a "democratic and social republic" they waged a bloody four-day battle with 200,000 well-equipped government troops. Marx pointed out: "This was the first great battle between two big antagonistic classes in modern society."* However, this uprising was ultimately crushed owing to the great disparity in strength. The defeat of the June uprising caused the European revolution to drift temporarily into low tide.

Marx and Engels personally took part in the revolutionary struggles of 1848 and ceaselessly summed up the lessons of revolutionary experience in the struggle as well. From 1848 to 1852 they wrote a series of brilliant works, of which the important ones were "Class Struggle in France, 1848-1850," "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League," "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" and so forth. In those works, Marx and Engels further expounded and developed the theories of proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship and profoundly criticized the illusions harbored by the petty-bourgeois socialists toward the bourgeois state. In minutely examining the history of the birth and development of the state machine of the French bourgeoisie and its role after the 1848 revolution, Marx keenly observed that in the past "All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it. The parties that contended for domination and succeeded one another regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor."** In order to suppress revolution the bourgeoisie were always and ceaselessly strengthening their own state machine; the experience of the failure of the revolution in 1848 proved that for the proletariat "the slightest improvement in its position remains a utopia within the bourgeois republic, a utopia that becomes a crime as soon as an attempt is made to turn it into a reality."+ Consequently, the proletarian revolution absolutely cannot attain its own aim by simply seizing and making use of the old state machine but must adopt a new revolutionary and militant slogan which calls for "Overthrow of the bourgeoisie! Dictatorship of the working class!"++ Lenin held that the above-mentioned thoughts of

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* "Class Struggle in France, 1848-1850," "Selected Works of Marx and Engels,"Vol. I, p. 415.

** "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," "Selected Works of Marx and Engels," Vol. I, p. 692.

\+ "Class Struggle in France, 1848-1850," "Selected Works of Marx and Engels," Vol. I, p. 417.

++ Ibid.

Marx had already taken a great stride forward as compared with "Communist Manifesto," as they had already definitely set forth the scientific conclusion that the proletariat must use violence to smash the state machine of the bourgeoisie.

One of the main reasons for the defeat of the revolution in 1848 was the harm inflicted on the workers by the lack of thoroughness of the petty-bourgeois democrats in the revolution and by the reformist ideology of the petty-bourgeois socialists. When Marx and Engels summed up the experience of this revolution, they mercilessly exposed the democrats' idea of having the whole movement subordinate to one stage of the movement, and the views of people like Proudhon and Louis Blanc calling for cooperation with the bourgeoisie and reform of capitalism, and then clearly set forth the theory of continuous revolution. Marx and Engels pointed out that "Our interest and our task is to make revolution without interruption.... For us, the issue is not changing the system of private ownership but abolishing it; not covering up class contradictions but abolishing classes; not reforming the existing society but building a new one."* The essence of scientific socialism is: "This socialism is the declaration of the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat as the necessary transit point to the abolition of class distinctions generally, to the abolition of all the relations of production on which they rest, to the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these relations."** These thoughts of Marx and Engels not only gave expression to the full revolutionary spirit of the proletariat but also provided a touchstone for distinguishing true socialism from the false. Socialism precisely means class dictatorship of the proletariat; without the dictatorship of the proletariat there is no socialism and to betray the dictatorship of the proletariat is to betray socialism. At the same time, with these thoughts, Marx and Engels had still more concretely expounded the historical task of the proletariat as one of eliminating the four "alls," that is, in all spheres of the economy, politics and ideology and in all stages of revolutionary development, it was necessary to consistently maintain an all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie, ceaselessly unfold socialist revolution so as to ultimately eliminate classes and realize communism. In this way, the revolution of 1848 brought about a substantial development of the Marxist theory on proletarian dictatorship.

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* "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League," "Selected Works of Marx and Engels," Vol. I, p. 385.

** "Class Struggle in France, 1848-1850," "Selected Works of Marx and Engels," Vol. I, pp. 479-480.

(IV)

Following the debacle of the revolution in 1848, Europe entered a period of political reaction and the ruling classes in various countries frenziedly strangled the revolutionary movements. Nonetheless, in the wake of the rapid development of capitalism in Western Europe and North America in the 1850's and 1860's, the ranks of the workers were also ceaselessly expanded. Owing to the ever worsening situation in the livelihood conditions of the workers, class contradictions daily became more acute and after the 1860's, the workers' movement in Europe once again rose to a high tide. Still, the workers' movement stood at a rather low level. At that time Marxism had still not been widely disseminated and the various opportunist trends of thought were still inundating the mass of workers. Although Proudhon had already died by the mid-1860's, his followers inherited his mantle. They continued to view the establishment of "people's banks" and workers' cooperatives as wonder drugs for curing the ills of society, and forcefully opposed proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship. At the same time, with the beginning of the 1860's, the opportunist ideology of Lassalle began to flood the workers' movement in Germany. Maintaining a supra-class view of the state, Lassalle strived to substitute the method of universal suffrage for violent revolution and clamored that once universal suffrage was put into effect, the reactionary Prussian state would be transformed into a "free state of the people" which would then lead to "rule by the whole people" and to the "elimination of class antagonism in society." Economically, Lassalle advocated peacefully growing into socialism through the setting up and development of workers' producer cooperatives under "state financing" by the Kingdom of Prussia. By the late 1860's, an opportunist faction represented by Bakunin emerged in the international workers movement. Bakunin inherited and expanded upon Proudhon's anarchist ideology, calling for the establishment of an anarchical society where every individual had the "fullest freedom." He was opposed to all power and authority, holding that any and all power and authority were a negation of freedom. He called for the abolition of all states immediately within 24 hours after "social revolution" because, in his view, "if there are states, then there must be government power" and "all government is a manifestation of exploitation," even "revolutionary dictatorship" being no exception.

In order to eradicate the influence of these various opportunist ideologies among the workers and to lead the international workers' movement into the orbit of Marxism, Marx and Engels carried out a great many theoretical and practical activities during this period. In 1864, with Marx's personal participation, an international workers' congress was convened in London, founding the International Workers' Association, that is the First International. From 1864 to the eve of the revolution of the Paris Commune, the First International, under the leadership of Marx and Engels, waged an uncompromising struggle against the various opportunist trends of thought in the international workers' movement, Proudhonism in particular, widely disseminated the doctrines of

Marxism among the masses of workers in various countries and upheld the revolutionary Marxist line on proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship.

In July 1870 the Franco-Prussian War broke out. After the war started, the French army suffered one reverse after another and the Prussian army very quickly moved into French territory. In early September, the French Emperor Napoleon the Third was forced to surrender at Sedan and the angry Parisian workers, citizens and soldiers of the National Army of Self-Defense rose up to topple the monarchy. Although France formed a "Government of National Defense," political power remained in the hands of a small group of bourgeois elements. The "Government of National Defense" feared the workers more than it feared the Prussian army; "In this conflict between national duty and class interest, it did not hesitate for one moment in turning into a Government of National Betrayal."* The "Government of National Defense" on the one hand hurriedly acceded to the treasonable terms of surrender with Prussia, ceding territory and paying indemnities; at the same time, with the support of the Prussian occupation forces, it assembled counter-revolutionary troops to intrigue against and suppress the masses of patriotic workers and citizens. On March 18, 1871, the great Parisian working class staged an armed uprising, destroyed the government's counter-revolutionary troops and the reactionary government's chieftain Thiers and company fled in haste from Paris to Versailles. On March 28 the Parisian voters produced the first workers' government in history -- the Paris Commune.

Revolutionary leaders Marx and Engels attached extremely great significance to the great new creation of the Parisian workers and from the first day that the Commune was founded, they watched its activities with close concern, seriously studied each and every policy of the Commune and gave their utmost support to its cause. On the third day after the defeat of the Paris Commune, Marx read out his glorious work "The Civil War in France" at the General Council of the "International," in which he thoroughly exposed the bourgeois slander and distortion against the Commune and profoundly analyzed the experience and lessons of the Commune. Afterward, Marx and Engels continued to defend the principles of the Commune in a series of works and further developed the Marxist theories with respect to proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship.

The experience of the Paris Commune proved that if the proletariat is to win the victory in the revolution and consolidate the proletarian dictatorship, then it must maintain a firm grip on revolutionary arms. In the past, because the people often laid down their arms after victory in revolutionary struggle, the fruits of

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* "The Civil War in France," "Selected Works of Marx and Engels," Vol. II, p. 354.

victory were always usurped by the bourgeoisie; but "the new feature of this revolution is that the people after the first rise, have not disarmed themselves and surrendered their power into the hands of the Republican mountebanks of the ruling classes."* Thus the Paris Commune revolution was able to win victory because the proletariat used its own arms to destroy the arms of the counter-revolutionary government; the Paris Commune was able to maintain itself for more than two months because the people consistently held the weapons firmly in their own hands. The 72 days of the Commune were also 72 days of armed uprising, armed struggle and armed self-defense. Thus Marx observed: "The primary condition for proletarian dictatorship is a proletarian army. The working class must fight for the right to liberate itself on the battlefield."**

The Paris Commune represented the first effort at smashing the state machine of the bourgeoisie and establishing a proletarian dictatorship. When Marx summed up the experience of the revolution in 1848, he held that the proletarian revolution had to take up the task of smashing the state machine of the bourgeoisie. The practice of the Paris Commune fully proved this assertion by Marx to be absolutely true. After the Paris Commune, Marx and Engels time and again pointed out: "The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machine and wield it for its own purpose," because "the political instrument of their enslavement cannot serve as the political instrument of their emancipation."*** Marx and Engels pointed out that the great achievement of the Paris Commune was that instead of transferring the bureaucratic-military machine from the hands of one group of people into those of another as was the case in the past, it thoroughly smashed the old state machine while at the same time replacing it with a new state. The Commune did away with the standing army and the police and replaced them with the armed people; the Commune abolished the bureaucratic organs of the bourgeoisie, did away with the system of monetary privilege and high salaries for officials; it stipulated that all public functionaries had to be elected by the people -- subject to removal at any time, and that all public functionaries, from top to bottom, could only receive the wages of the average worker. Disavowing the bourgeois parliamentary system, the Commune was both a legislative body and a working institution of government and government members were made up of workers or workers' representatives, directly responsible to the people; the Commune vigorously organized the masses of people to take part in state administration and put into practice a centralized system based on genuine democracy. Marx and Engels gave high praise to this

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* "The Civil War in France" in book form, p. 151.

** "Commemorating the Seventh Anniversary of the Founding of the International," "Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on the Paris Commune," p. 242.

*** "The Civil War in France" in book form, p. 188.

revolutionary innovative spirit of the Parisian workers and held that these measures were great creative measures to prevent the transformation of the state and state organs from servants of society into masters over society. Marx pointed out that "the Commune's true secret was this. It was essentially a working-class government, the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labor."*

However, these measures adopted by the Commune could do no more than transform the nature of state power. The preliminary practice of the Commune proved that the proletariat "in order to work out its own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending by its own economic agencies, will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men."** Consequently, the proletarian dictatorship will cover a very long historical period. This period will necessarily be fraught with acute and complex class struggles because the revolutionary cause of the proletariat will definitely "run up against the resistance of vested interests and class egotism."+ The violent class struggle during the period of the Paris Commune's existence proved this point. Therefore, Marx pointed out: "The Commune does not do away with class struggle, through which the working classes strive for the abolition of all classes, and, therefore, of all forms of class rule."++ This is also to say that the task of proletarian dictatorship is to carry class struggle through to the end, until classes are done away with and man and his environment are fully transformed to suit the advent of communism.

The basic cause for the failure of the Paris Commune was that it lacked the leadership of a genuine proletarian revolutionary political party armed with Marxist theories. Those holding the leadership posts in the Commune were mainly the Blanquists and Proudhonists, petty-bourgeois socialists who were unable to formulate a correct line. It was precisely owing to their leadership that the Commune committed a series of serious mistakes: It did not promptly advance against Versailles, did not resolutely suppress the sabotage activities of the internal counter-revolutionary elements, did not expropriate the expropriators, did not establish a strong alliance with the peasants and so forth; this consequently led to the ultimate defeat of the Commune. Precisely in line with the lessons of the Commune and after

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* "The Civil War in France" in book form, p. 58.

** Ibid., p. 59.

\+ Ibid., p. 143.

++ Ibid., p. 142

its failure, Marx and Engels once more stressed the importance of establishing a proletarian revolutionary political party. They pointed out many times that only when the proletariat forms an independent political party will it be able to act as a class in struggle against the combined forces of the bourgeoisie. "It is necessary that the working class be organized as a political party in order to insure that the social revolution will win victory and its ultimate objective -- the abolition of classes -- be realized.* This is also to say that party leadership is the basic guarantee for the victory of the proletarian revolution and the basic guarantee for preserving the proletarian dictatorship.

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After the defeat of the Paris Commune, the center of the international workers' movement shifted to Germany. In the 1860's and 1870's the workers' movement in Germany underwent very great development because of the direct solicitude of Marx and Engels. In 1869, after going through a protracted and fierce struggle with Lassalleanism, the German working class established its own political party -- the German Social Democratic Workers' Party (Eisenachers). The German Social Democratic Workers' Party led the masses of workers to carry out resolute struggle against the reactionary internal and external policies of the German ruling class; during the period of the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune it implemented a proletarian internationalist line and more and more won the support of the German worker masses. However, this party was not mature enough politically and its leaders, Wilhelm Liebknecht and Bebel, still did not have a true understanding of Marxist revolutionary thought on a good many questions. This was particularly shown on the question of their hankering after a formal unity of the workers' movement and unprincipled pursuit of a merger with the declining Lassalleans. Despite the repeated warnings raised by Marx and Engels against this, they still stubbornly persisted in their errors. Finally, at the beginning of 1875, together with the ringleaders of the Lassalle clique, Liebknecht drafted a party program, filled with Lassalle's opportunist views, and prepared to submit it for discussion and endorsement at a meeting to merge the two factions which was to be convened at Gotha in May of that year. After Marx and Engels saw this program they were very angry, holding that it was "a thoroughly objectionable program that demoralizes the party."** In order to prevent it from exerting an unfavorable influence on the

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* "Resolution at the Congress of All Confederations Held at The Hague," "Marx, Engels,Lenin and Stalin on the Paris Commune," p. 257.

** "Critique of the Gotha Program," "Selected Works of Marx and Engels," Vol. III, p. 3.

German working class movement, in April and May of 1875 Marx wrote "Some Views on the Draft Program of the German Workers' Party" (i.e., "Critique of the Gotha Program"), a brilliant work which profoundly criticized the reactionary viewpoints of the Lassalleans as advertised in this draft program and the Right opportunist stand of the leaders of the German party.

"Critique of the Gotha Program" was another programmatic document of scientific communism following "Communist Manifesto." In this work, Marx systematically expounded the doctrine on the two stages of development regarding the transition period and communism while at the same time criticizing Lassalle's opportunist viewpoint. Marx pointed out that "between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."* This famous statement by Marx was a major development in the theory of proletarian dictatorship.

Between capitalist society and communist society there is a "revolutionary period of transformation"; this "revolutionary period of transformation" is referred to as socialist society. Why must there be a "revolutionary period of transformation" for capitalist society to pass over into communist society? As Marx pointed out, this was because socialist society has "just emerged from capitalist society; and is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges."** In socialist society, although private ownership of the means of production has been abolished and exploitation has been eliminated, yet in respect to distribution of consumer goods, owing to the practice of the principle of "distribution according to work," it is carried out along the same yardstick for workers who have different labor capabilities and different family responsibilities; this kind of "equal right here is still -- in principle -- bourgeois right."*** At the same time, the differences between worker and peasant, town and countryside, and mental and manual labor still exist as leftovers from the old society and the exploiting-class ideology and the force of old habits cannot be done away with at once. Therefore, without a "revolutionary period of transformation," it is impossible to eliminate the various vestiges left over from capitalist society and we cannot pass over into communist society. During this "revolutionary period of transformation," in order to smash the resistance of the

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* "Critique of the Gotha Program," "Selected Works of Marx and Engels," Vol. III, p. 21.

** Ibid., p. 10.

*** Ibid., p. 11.

bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes, in order to eliminate the three major differences, restrict bourgeois rights and ultimately eliminate them, and in order to weed out the influence of the exploiting-class ideology and the force of old habits, we must have a period of political transition. During this period we must consistently maintain the "revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."

The above-mentioned ideas, as developed in "Critique of the Gotha Program," can actually be said to be a summation of Marx's theory on proletarian dictatorship.

Following "Critique of the Gotha Program," Marx and Engels again, one after the other, carried out resolute criticism and struggle against the petty-bourgeois socialist Dühring and the Right opportunist clique made up of Hochberg, Schram and Bernstein (the Zurich trio) that had emerged within the German party. Owing to the personal concern of Marx and Engels, the German workers' movement underwent great development after the 1870's, and became a force which struck awe among the ruling classes. In 1890, the German ruling class, seeing that its high-handed policies were of no avail, was forced to revoke the anti-socialist "emergency act" which had been in force for over a decade, and the party's legal position was restored. However, the change of tactics on the part of the ruling class reactivated the Right opportunist elements within the party. As soon as the "emergency act" was revoked, Vollmar, the party's right-wing chieftain, jumped out to demand nullification of the stipulated objectives of the party's program and began a clamor for "achieving everything through the parliament," openly advocating the fallacies of reformism and peacefully growing into socialism. Vollmar's opinions immediately received support within the party and from such leading personages of the Second International as Bernstein; even party leader Liebknecht was so muddle-headed on this theory that he came to discuss the possibility of "peaceful transition."

The growing strength of right-wing opportunism was not a phenomenon restricted to Germany alone. At that time, capitalism was beginning to make its transition to imperialism and the ruling classes of the various countries were vigorously using a part of their monopoly profits to buy off the worker aristocrats, successively using liberal policies to cheat and swindle the workers. At the same time, the circumstances of the protracted "peaceful development" of capitalism after the defeat of the Paris Commune and the victories won in parliamentary struggle by the /workers'/ parties of various countries also turned the heads of some people and caused them to turn the legality they had made use of in the "peaceful development" period of capitalism into one they blindly worshipped, to view parliamentary struggle as standing above everything else and to gradually sink into the mire of reformism and place proletarian dictatorship and proletarian revolution in the back of their minds. In this way parliamentarianism and legality grew daily stronger among the paries of the Second International.

In order to oppose the opportunism within the German party and the Second International and to defend the proletarian revolutionary line of Marxism, Engels carried out a resolute, uncompromising struggle after Marx died. In 1891, ignoring the obstruction of the opportunist leadership within the German party, Engels insisted on making public "Critique of the Gotha Program" which had been shelved for 16 years. Right after this he wrote an introduction to the book "The Civil War in France," in which he summed up the experience of the Paris Commune, pointed out the utter importance of the proletariat grasping revolutionary weapons, and criticized all manner of "parliamentary fans" within the German party. Lenin accorded a very high evaluation to the thesis concerning the importance of grasping revolutionary weapons in this introduction by Engels, pointing out that this was "a remarkably vivid summing-up of the lessons of the Commune" and "may be justly called the last word of Marxism on the question of the state."*

"Critique of the Draft Program of the Social Democratic Party in 1891" published by Engels in this period was a sequel to "Critique of the Gotha Program." In this brilliant work, Engels penetratingly criticized the German party leaders for basically avoiding mention of proletarian dictatorship in their program and for not even daring to strive for a democratic republic because of their fear that the government would reinstate the "emergency act"; then and there he pointed out that to "forget about the fundamental interests for temporary advantage of the present, to be concerned with momentary achievements without regard to the consequences, to sacrifice the future of the movement for its present -- this is opportunism, opportunism from first to last."**

The theory of proletarian dictatorship, which was established and developed by Marx and Engels in the course of protracted revolutionary struggle, sums up the historical experience of the struggle of the working classes in various countries to overthrow capitalist rule and establish a proletarian dictatorship; it is a powerful ideological weapon for opposing opportunism and revisionism and for carrying out socialist revolution and construction. Today, to seriously study the teachings of the revolutionary teachers on the question of proletarian dictatorship and to conscientiously research the struggle on the question of proletarian dictatorship in the history of the international communist movement is of very great and immediate significance with regard to our deeper understanding of Chairman Mao's important directives on theoretical questions, implementing the Party's basic line, strengthening all-round dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and in opposing and guarding against revisionism.

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* "The State and Revolution" in book form, p. 67.

** "Critique of the Draft Program of the Social Democratic Party in 1891," "Complete Works of Marx and Engels," Vol. XXII, p. 274.

Proletarian Dictatorship Is Our Heirloom

- Historical background of quotations from "Marx, Engels and Lenin on the Dictatorship of the Proletariat"

by

the Workers Theoretical Group of Nanking
Chemical Industrial Company

(Li-shih Yen-chiu /Historical Research/, No. 3, June 20, 1975)

With Chairman Mao's important instruction on the question of theory as the key link, "Marx, Engels and Lenin on the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" has been culled from 21 important works and an important letter, ranging from "Communist Manifesto" published by Marx and Engels in February 1848 to the talk delivered by Lenin at the 10th Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in March 1921.

The 73 years from 1848 to 1921 were shining years in which the proletariat waged life-and-death struggle against the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes. During this period, three great revolutions had erupted one after the other, namely, the revolution in Europe in 1848, the uprising of the Paris Commune in 1871 and the October Revolution in Russia in 1917. In these revolutions, the forerunners of our working class obtained their precious experience at the cost of their blood and lives. These experiences were summed up by Marx, Engels and Lenin and may be concentrated in one phrase: dictatorship of the proletariat!

These 73 years were also great years of violent struggle between Marxism-Leninism and various forms of opportunism. Marxism "has had to go through struggle for every forward step it takes in its life cycle." It directed its criticism mainly at petty-bourgeois socialism represented by Proudhon in the 1840's, and directed its effort largely at liquidating the opportunism of Bakunin and Lassalle in the 1870's. Through these struggles, "Marxism has unconditionally triumphed over all other ideological systems in the workers' movement." The theoretical victory of Marxism forced its enemies to disguise themselves as Marxists. Toward the end of the 19th century, the adverse currents of revisionism assumed flood proportions. In his struggle against the revisionism of Bernstein and Kautsky, Lenin defended Marxism and developed it to the stage of Leninism. Although the various forms of opportunism differed in name, they were basically the same, they all opposed the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx, Engels and Lenin wrote a great number of articles to criticize them; to put it in a nutshell, they all upheld the dictatorship of the proletariat!

The Marxist theory on the dictatorship of the proletariat has been developed step by step in the course of struggle. Take this road, and we workers can stand up, build socialism, and realize the grand goal of communism. Chairman Mao has said what we want to say, the dictatorship of the proletariat is our "talisman" and "heirloom"!

Below, we shall first deal with the circumstances surrounding the European revolution of 1848.

From the bourgeois revolution in 17th-century England to the eve of the Paris Commune in 1870, it was a period which saw capitalism ascending. At that time, it was mainly a revolution against feudalism, one that paved the way for the capitalist relations of production. Ever since the first day it was born, the bourgeoisie has been an enemy of proletarians. Following the development of capitalism, the contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie have also become more and more acute with each passing day. After 1830, the working class waged a political struggle against the bourgeoisie and rose in revolt many times. Marx and Engels published the "Communist Manifesto," in which they summed up the experience and solemnly declared that "the first step in the workers' revolution is to enable the proletariat to rise into a ruling class and strive for democracy." After seizing political power, the workers had to make two kinds of "rupture": "the most radical rupture with traditional property relations" and "the most radical rupture with traditional concepts."

Soon after the publication of "Communist Manifesto," the 1848 revolution erupted in Europe. It first took the form of the February revolution in France. In the revolution, the workers were the main force but the fruits of victory were seized by the bourgeoisie. At that time class and national contradictions in various countries of Europe were all very acute, like faggots spread everywhere. They were set ablaze by the February revolution. On March 13, the people of Vienna toppled the Metternich regime; on March 18, the people of Berlin rose in armed uprising and forced the King of Prussia to bow and surrender. However, as in France, these fruits of revolution were all swallowed up by the bourgeoisie.

No sooner had the bourgeoisie seized political power by relying on the workers' strength than they turned around and suppressed the working class. In France, the workers, unable to stand the persecution of the bourgeoisie any longer, staged the June uprising. This "was the first great battle between the two major opposing classes" in capitalist society. The 45,000 insurgents battled with over 250,000 members of the reactionary army and police for five days and five nights and were finally defeated. After the failure of the uprising, the bourgeoisie carried out frantic class reprisals. Some 11,000 workers were slaughtered, and more than 25,000 were banished. Meanwhile, in Berlin and Vienna workers were also massacred.

Why did the revolution fail? An important reason was the influence exerted by petty-bourgeois socialism over the workers. This sham socialism were represented by Proudhon and Louis Blanc. They advocated social reform and opposed the proletarian revolution. Economically, they did not dig away the old roots of exploitation; and politically, they advocated cooperation with the bourgeoisie and dreamed of freeing the workers from exploitation within the framework of a bourgeois republic.

Marx and Engels took an active part in the mass revolutionary struggle in 1848-1849. They put forth a program of struggle, edited a revolutionary newspaper, went among the worker masses, and led the masses forward. After the failure of the revolution, they wrote a series of works to sum up experience in all aspects and settle scores with petty-bourgeois socialism, and developed the theory of proletarian dictatorship.

In the book "Class Struggle in France, 1848-1850," Marx clearly set forth the brilliant thesis of "proletarian dictatorship." As he pointed out, blood shed during the June uprising told the workers that they must not believe in petty-bourgeois socialism, that the working class "harbors only an illusion when it wants to improve a bit its condition within the framework of a bourgeois republic," and that it should replace this utopia with a revolutionary combat slogan. "This slogan is: overthrow the bourgeoisie! Dictatorship by the working class!"

It is also in this book and in "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League" drafted jointly by Marx and Engels that the idea of "continuous revolution" was clearly put forth. Petty-bourgeois socialism was content with promoting reform under the capitalist system while proletarian socialism "is the declaration of the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat." The objective of this dictatorship is the "abolition of class distinctions generally, the abolition of all the relations of production on which they rest, the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production and the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations." This means that in order to persistently exercise all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in all spheres and in all stages of the development of revolution, the proletariat must draw a clear line of demarcation with petty-bourgeois socialism.

In his letter to Weydemeyer in March 1852, Marx generalized his theory of the state and put forth a three-point conclusion: "(1) The existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production; (2) the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society." These three points are interrelated, giving complete expression to the entire process of the emergence, development and withering away of the dictatorship of the proletariat, including the overall task and practical content of proletarian dictatorship. It is only with such an understanding that we can have a correct outlook of the universe and be conscious in persistently exercising all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie.

Let us now talk about the circumstances surrounding the uprising of the Paris Commune in 1871.

After the 1848 revolution, European capitalism underwent tremendous development. The development of capitalism brought about two consequences: one was that the life of the proletariat was getting harder and harder, and although production developed the workers' real wages continued to fall; the other was that the proletarian ranks were swelling. From the 1850's to the 1960's the number of French workers had grown from 1.2 million to 4.7 million and the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie had by this time risen to become the principal contradiction. The workers' movement, which once had been in a low tide after the June uprising, surged ahead again in the mid-1860's. The objective conditions for revolution were maturing. In 1864, the First International (International Workers' Association) was founded under the direct impetus given by Marx. Within the International, Marx and Engels struggled against Proudhonism, against English unionism and against the anarchist Bakunin. As a result, Marxism became more and more attractive to people.

On March 18, 1871, the Parisian working class staged an armed uprising, overthrew the reactionary rule of the bourgeoisie, destroyed the old state machine, and founded the first workers' government in history -- the Paris Commune. The Commune adopted a series of revolutionary measures in the political, economic and other fields. Its first decree was to abolish the bourgeois standing army that suppressed the people and to build a people's armed force. It was precisely by relying on the guns of the proletariat that the Commune was founded and lasted 72 days. And it failed also because it had not made full use of this revolutionary authority.

The experience and lessons of the Commune tell us that after seizing political power, the proletariat must uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat and carry the revolution through to the end. Since the overwhelming majority of the leading members of the Commune were Blanquists and Proudhonists, they did not advance on Versailles promptly to destroy the old nest of counter-revolution. They also did not "expropriate the expropriators" nor take over the French banks. Thiers, this poisonous snake that had been frozen, was able to wake up and gather a large number of reactionary troops to strangle the Paris Commune. This "home-coming corps" on returning to Paris carried out ruthless massacre; in Paris alone, over 30,000 fighters of the Commune were killed. What a painful lesson!

Marx and Engels summed up the experience of the Paris Commune and criticized opportunism. They further solved the question of how to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx pointed out in "Civil War in France": "The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machine and wield it for its own purpose." In a series of works including "Commemorating the Seventh Anniversary of the Founding of the International," Marx also repeatedly expounded the importance of having a revolutionary army.

In "Civil War in France," he for the first time solved the question of replacing the shattered bourgeois state machine, that is, by a government

of the working class patterned after the Paris Commune. Marx emphasized this experience of the Commune: All the public functionaries were produced by general elections and could be removed by the voters at any time; and they all received a salary equal to the wages of the average worker. This was the only way to prevent state organs from degenerating.

After the defeat of the Commune, the reactionary forces staged a big chorus against the First International. Bakunin, hiding within the International, jumped out again. An anarchist, he held mainly that all states were "evil" and should be "abolished." In essence he was against replacing a state of bourgeois dictatorship by a state of proletarian dictatorship. No wonder that he frantically attacked the Paris Commune for its "criminal behavior" in promoting the dictatorship of the proletariat, and distorted the elimination of classes through the road of proletarian dictatorship by saying that this meant "in order to liberate the masses of people it is first necessary to enslave them." Marx and Engels waged a resolute struggle against Bakuninism. But Lassalle clamored that a landlord-bourgeois state could be turned into a "free state." To pursue the merger with Lassalleans, Liebknecht, gave up the principle, concocted the "Gotha Program," and accepted the fallacy of the "free state." In order to liquidate Lassalleanism which had endangered the workers' movement for many years and to deal a fatal blow at it, Marx and Engels again plunged into the battle to criticize the "Gotha Program."

"Critique of the Gotha Program" is a summing up of the experience of struggle in the international communist movement, a shining example of criticizing opportunism, and a great program of scientific communism. In this great work, Marx put forth a famous thesis summing up his revolutionary doctrines: "Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat." Marx stated that communism must go through two stages of development, that its primary stage, namely the socialist society, is both a society which inevitably bears the birthmarks of the old society and a society which gradually wipes out these birthmarks and undergoes "revolutionary transformation" leading to communism. Socialist society being such a society, it is therefore necessary to firmly stick to the dictatorship of the proletariat throughout the period of transition from capitalism to communism. Basically there is nothing like a "free state" as advocated by Lassalle. Just as Engels, strongly denouncing this fallacy of Lassalle's,pointed out, when the proletariat still needs a state, it does so not for the sake of freedom but for the sake of suppressing its own enemy.

Since then, opportunism espoused by Dühring and others was criticized and by the 1880's and 1890's Marxism held the dominant position in the workers' movement.

Let us turn to the circumstances surrounding the October Revolution.

The October Socialist Revolution of 1917 resulted in the establishment in the world of the first state of proletarian dictatorship. Both the June uprising and the Paris Commune failed, but the workers did not shed their blood in vain. The proletariat eventually triumphed in Russia. Why? Of course, the objective conditions were different. While the first two uprisings took place in a period of free capitalism, this one occurred in a period of imperialism. "Imperialism is the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat." Swayed by the law of uneven capitalist economic and political developments, wars were bound to break out among the imperialist powers and were bound also to sap the strength of the imperialist powers, thus enabling the proletariat to operate in the weak segments of the imperialist front and to win the victory of revolution first in one or several countries. The first imperialist world war, which broke out in 1914, precisely created such objective conditions in Russia. However, having the objective conditions does not mean victory in revolution. The decisive factor for the victorions October Revolution is the correctness of Lenin's line.

Leninism was formed and developed in the struggle against the revisionism of the Second International. At the imperialist stage, monopoly capitalists might use superprofits to "buy off the superstructure of the proletariat so as to cultivate, form and consolidate opportunism." This opportunism, donning a Marxist cloak, is called revisionism. What does it revise? The most important aspect is its revision of the Marxist theory on the dictatorship of the proletariat. As Lenin saw it clearly, "opportunism is our main enemy"; "without first completely vanquishing opportunism in the workers' movement, it is out of the question to talk about the dictatorship of the proletariat." In 1895, Engels died and Lenin took over his banner and continued the struggle against revisionism. Around July-August, 1917, Lenin wrote "The State and Revolution," in which he settled scores with revisionism in a general manner while systematically verifying, expounding and developing the Marxist theory on the dictatorship of the proletariat. This laid an adequate theoretical groundwork for the October Revolution.

After the victory of the October Revolution, Lenin led the people to unfold in depth a struggle for socialist revolution. From November, 1917 to January-February, 1918, they dissolved the constitutional assembly, confiscated land, banks and big industries, and pushed the revolution to all corners of the country. Then, in the two months of February and March, they waged the struggle for peace, signed the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty with Germany, terminated the state of war and won time for consolidating Soviet political power. In this period, Lenin wrote the article "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" and called upon the whole Party to organize economic and national defense construction. Frightened by and resentful of the growing strength of the newly-born dictatorship of the proletariat, the imperialists and internal reactionaries launched a counter-revolutionary war. In the 3-year civil war, from the first half of 1918 to the end of 1920, the country was surrounded by imperialist troops and suffered from disturbances by the White bandit troops. With grain hoarding by the

rich peasants, rapid disintegration of small production, industrial paralysis and food shortages, the Russian proletariat was in an extremely precarious situation! Imperialism vainly attempted to strangle the dictatorship of the proletariat "in the cradle." To meet such needs of imperialism, the Second International revisionists also launched a counter-revolutionary encirclement campaign against Leninism. In the autumn of 1918, just when the imperialists were preparing to assassinate Lenin, Kautsky threw out a pamphlet called "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," which in essence was a poisonous arrow aimed at the dictatorship of the proletariat. Hoisting the tattered banner of "pure democracy," Kautsky frantically attacked the use of revolutionary violence in Russia to suppress the exploiters as "harming democracy" and "destroying democracy." On August 30, the counter-revolutionary elements opened fire in an attempt to assassinate Lenin. Facts punctured Kautsky's lies. In October, as soon as Lenin recovered from his gun wound, he threw himself into the battle to criticize Kautsky. He wrote "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky," indignantly denounced Kautsky's fallacies, and further armed the working class with the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was precisely by relying on the great might of the dictatorship of the proletariat and a series of revolutionary measures that the Russian working class resisted, stood firm and won under extremely harsh circumstances. The victory of the Russian revolution gave an impetus to the development of revolutionary movements in various countries. In March, 1919, the Third International (Communist International) was founded during the struggle against the revisionism of the Second International. To use the experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia to help the fraternal parties of various countries to adjust their lines and in view of the "Left" infantile disorder that appeared in the international communist movement at that time, Lenin wrote in haste "'Left-Wing' Communism, An Infantile Disorder" in April-May, 1920. This important essay was of far-reaching significance in proving the all-round dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie.

Lenin had actual experience in leading the dictatorship of the proletariat. In face of the reality of ruthless class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat and of attack by opportunism, in the seven years from the victory of the October Revolution to his death, Lenin dealt with the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat almost at every meeting and in every essay, undergoing a process of practice, knowledge, again practice and again knowledge, and greatly developed Marxism.

Lenin made an analysis of the laws of class struggle throughout the period of transition and, in view of revisionists' refusal to recognize class struggle throughout the period of transition from capitalism to communism, pointed out: "This period is inevitably a period in which class struggle is unprecedentedly ruthless and the form of class struggle is unprecedentedly acute." It is inevitably "a period of the struggle between capitalism which has been defeated but has not been wiped out and communism which has been born but is still very weak." Why is this so? Lenin made an analysis in several aspects.

First, the overthrown class of exploiters "has not vanished, and cannot be made to vanish overnight." They still held the upper hand in many fields. Their resistance even more ferocious, they constantly tried to make a comeback, besides colluding with international capital and maintaining illicit relations with foreign countries.

Second, small production still existed on a mass scale. It "engenders capitalism and the bourgeois continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale," providing soil for the restoration of capitalism.

Third, since the commodity system and bourgeois rights were inevitably retained in socialist society, coupled with corruption by the force of habit of the old society, new bourgeois elements might also emerge from among the workers and the personnel of Soviet state organs.

Fourth, the exploiting-class ideology might still give off odor for a long time to pollute the air and harm the masses, and the task of the dictatorship of the proletariat was to "break all resistance from the capitalists, not only resistance in the military and political fields, but also the most intensive and violent resistance in the ideological field."

On the basis of this analysis of class struggle in socialist society, Lenin incisively demonstrated the necessity of imposing an all-round proletarian dictatorship over the bourgeoisie. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not only dictatorship in a certain sphere, but "a persistent struggle -- bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative -- against the forces and traditions of the old society." Nor is the dictatorship of the proletariat a dictatorship in a certain stage, for it is aimed at abolishing the three major differences and bourgeois rights to "create conditions in which it will be impossible for the bourgeoisie to exist, or for a new one to arise." In a word, the dictatorship of the proletariat must be an overall dictatorship.

Lenin paid particular attention to the role of communist factors. He vigorously publicized communist Saturday voluntary labor /subbotniks/, a new thing in itself, wrote a series of articles such as "A Great Beginning" on it, and practiced it personally. On May 1, 1920, he participated in Saturday voluntary labor like an ordinary communist did and, under the direction of other comrades, engaged in carrying wood for four hours. Lenin believed that only by vigorously fostering that "growing communism" was it possible to vanquish that "withering capitalism."

In addition, Lenin repeatedly stressed the importance of Party building and leadership under the dictatorship of the proletariat. He said: "The highest principle of dictatorship is ..... to enable the proletariat to retain the role of leadership and state power,"

and this role of leadership is realized through the proletarian political party. Under the extremely acute and complex conditions of class struggle, there can be no dictatorship of the proletariat without a party armed with Marxism-Leninism and closely tied to the masses. Lenin paid great attention to raising the quality of Party members and purging the Party of undesirable elements who sneaked into it. A party which fought in the vast ocean of the petty bourgeoisie must, in particular, have a most strict centralized system and discipline. We members of the Communist Party and of the working class must talk about the line, the overall situation, the Party spirit and unity. Unless we do so, we shall betray the Marxist theory on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lastly, let us talk about our three points of understanding.

Studying the quotations from Marx, Engels and Lenin on the dictatorship of the proletariat and reviewing the course of development of the theory of proletarian dictatorship has profoundly educated us.

We have come to understand that the theory of proletarian dictatorship has been formed with the blood of innumerable revolutionary martyrs over the past 130 years. Just think of it. How many had sacrificed their lives in the June uprising? How many for the Paris Commune? How many for the October Revolution? In order to establish and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat in our country, how many revolutionary martyrs had fallen before us? Today, whoever forgets about the dictatorship of the proletariat betrays the revolutionary cause of the proletariat!

After usurping Party and State leadership, the Khrushchev and Brezhnev renegade cliques, raising the tattered banner of "three compromises" and "two reconciliations," restored capitalism in the Soviet Union, turned the dictatorship of the proletariat completely into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, a German fascist-type dictatorship, and done what Hitler wanted to do but had not succeeded in doing. This is a most painful lesson in the international communist movement.

We have come to understand that the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat has also been developed during the two-line struggle. Lenin said rightly: "Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat." In the past, we made use of this touchstone to discern one revisionist after another. In the future, the class struggle will be even more complicated, and we can put revisionist chieftains like Lin Piao on the dock of history only when we hold a firm grip of this touchstone!

We have come to understand that the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat has also been a product of the application of dialectical materialism and historical materialism by the teachers of revolution in knowing and changing the world. The

workers' movement cannot spontaneously produce the theory of proletarian dictatorship. If we do not study the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Chairman Mao, all kinds of opportunism will take the opportunity and create havoc in our minds. In the work "The State," Lenin asked us to "devote some time to reading at least some of the most important works of Marx and Engels." We will firmly do so and genuinely make clear the question of proletarian dictatorship on the basis of combining theory with practice.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is our heirloom. Let us pass it down from generation to generation and carry the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat through to the end!

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